

This listing of claims will replace all prior listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A video signal process comprising the steps of: in a compression coding step, analyzing an input video signal at a picture rate and at a macroblock rate and taking compression coding decisions including picture rate coding decisions and macroblock rate coding decisions; forming a representation of the coding decisions; outputting said representation from the compression coding step and passing the representation along a video pathway with the input video signal; and downstream of the video pathway compression encoding the input video signal in accordance with said coding decisions.
- B 1 2. (Original) A process according to Claim 1 wherein said representation of the coding decision comprises an information bus in which the coding decisions are represented in the same format as they are represented in the compressed bitstream which is the output of said downstream compression coding operation.
3. (Previously presented) A process according to Claim 2, wherein said analysis generates information relating to picture size and type.
4. (Previously presented) A process according to Claim 1, wherein said analysis comprises the generation of candidate motion vectors.
5. (Original) A process according to Claim 4, wherein said analysis comprises the selection for each macroblock of the picture of a motion vector from said candidate motion vectors.
6. (Original) A process according to Claim 5, in which said analysis comprises the selection of a macroblock prediction mode.

7. (Previously presented) A process according to Claim 1 wherein said analysis includes a bit rate control and the taking of quantizer decisions appropriate to maintenance of a selected bit rate.

8. (Previously presented) A process according to Claim 5 wherein plural bit rates are selected and plural quantizer decisions are taken.

B1 9. (Currently amended) Compression pre-processing apparatus, comprising coding means for analysing a video signal at a picture rate and at a macroblock rate and taking compression coding decisions including picture rate coding decisions and macroblock rate coding decisions; means for processing the coding decisions and means for outputting, from the compression pre-processing apparatus, the processed coding decisions for passage with the video signal along a video pathway.

10. (Previously presented) Apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein said means for processing the coding decisions provides a representation of the coding decisions in the form of a compressed video bit stream lacking transform coefficients.

11. (Original) Apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein said means for outputting the processed coding decisions serves to modulate one or more least significant bits of the video signal.
